

daughter, Marie-Christine Dunham Pratt, she was a mother. To her late husband, theatre designer John Thomas Pratt, she was a wife of 49 years. Yet, to all, she was an exemplary American. Katherine earned her celebrity status in a time when discrimination was at its peak, revealing immense reservoirs of creativity and dedication. She then used her fame as a way to create positive change in the world. As every dancer knows, actions speak louder than words and it was clear that Katherine lived by this doctrine. Her life is an inspiration to me and her loss will be felt, not just by the dance community, but by all Americans.

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JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE  
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**HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 22, 2006*

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank Representative DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ for her hard work on behalf of recognizing May as Jewish American Heritage month and to express my gratitude to the President for his proclamation making May Jewish American Heritage Month.

After the burning of the Second Temple and the final dispersion of the Jews from Zion, people of Jewish heritage have settled in every corner of the world. There are Jews in

China, in India, in Mexico and in Greece. While Hitler almost murdered all the Jews of Europe, he did not entirely succeed.

Because of the moral values of this country we put our entire Nation into the fight against the Nazis in World War II. What is so remarkable about the fact that the United States fought so fiercely and so bravely in World War II is that they did so to save the world. That desire arose from the Nation's character, which is an amalgam of the religious heritage of its people—including its Jewish people.

Today I think about the Jewish soldiers in World War II who fought not even knowing of the death camps and the ovens. I think of the men who risked their lives every day in the mud of France and the fields of Belgium because they knew what was spreading and taking over Europe was immoral. When Eisenhower's troops first came upon a death camp, he made the camp guards and the German villagers who had lived in the green fields and gardens around the camp come to view the bodies and to bury them. The message was clear: Americans find what you have done here and you villagers have tolerated here to be an immense crime, an unimaginable crime.

The greatness of our people is their character. Jewish people have brought a lot to the making of that character. Jews have known that the values in the Five Books of Moses are universal and throughout 2,000 years of Diaspora brought their values with them to the shores of all the countries where they settled, including America.

Judaism is a religion and a value system. No one who is not a Jew is considered less

a person by a Jew. No stranger can be left without shelter, no hungry man without bread.

I could not help but notice in the Save Darfur Coalition and other grass roots organizations working so hard to stop the genocide in Darfur that many Jewish organizations are involved in the grass roots efforts. Among them are the American World Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, Jews against Genocide and the Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism. I have received letters from children in Jewish schools asking me to help the people of Darfur. Jewish people have a special understanding about genocide. The parents of these children who write to me may have lost grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins. But they also know they can write to their Congressman and their children can write and ask for help for these people so far away who are in desperate trouble as their relatives once were.

One of the characteristics I most admire is the activism many of the Jewish people engage in. That activism has meant a great deal to the civil rights movement. I also admire the way Jews have contributed to the "personality" of New York. As a New Yorker, I feel especially lucky because I have learned some Yiddish, some great jokes and have met some truly amazing people who love books, culture, art and life. I'm glad for the Jewish heritage I experience in my district every day I am at home.

I say to Jewish Americans today: Congratulations and mazal tov.